

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs), Display Energy Certificates (DECs) & inspecting air-conditioning

November 2018

Energy Performance of Buildings - Guidance note

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The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificate and Inspections) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 focus on the following three areas.

- Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)
- Display Energy Certificates (DECs)
- Inspecting air-conditioning systems

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

An EPC shows the energy efficiency of buildings. An EPC gives a building rating of between A and G. The ratings represent standard conditions so you can compare one building with another of a similar type. 'A' means the building is very energy efficient, and 'G' means it is not very energy efficient.

You need an EPC if you are the property owner, property developer or landlord and if you:

- are selling or renting your property;
- have built a new property;
- have made major changes to your property where you have altered it to create a number of different properties which are being used separately from one another. An example of this would be a large building or old house altered to form a number of new apartments.

You are legally responsible for making sure you have an EPC for your property if you are selling or renting it to someone else. You must show a copy of the EPC to anyone interested in buying or renting your property and must give a copy to the new owner or tenant.

An EPC lasts for 10 years and only an energy assessor registered with an accredited body can provide one. (You can get more information about the accredited bodies from your local Building Control office or by visiting www.epbniregister.com.) EPCs are held on a national register which is currently managed by a company called 'Landmark'. You can find a list of registered energy assessors for domestic properties at www.epbniregister.com. Once on this website you can

type in your postcode and you will be offered a list of 20 energy assessors in your local area. For non-domestic properties, visit www.epbniregister.nd.com.

If you do not have access to a computer, you can find an energy assessor by looking in the Yellow Pages under 'energy consultants' or 'energy conservation consultants'.

You do not need an EPC for:

- places of worship;
- temporary buildings which you will use for less than two years;
- industrial sites or workshops;
- non-residential agricultural buildings which use a small amount of energy, for example barns or outhouses;
- stand-alone buildings with a useful floor area of less than 50 square metres and which you do not live in, for example a small shop; and
- buildings that are due to be demolished.

Display Energy Certificate (DEC)

Similar to EPCs, DEC's give publicly funded buildings a rating from A to G to show how energy efficient they are. Unlike EPCs, DEC's take into account how the building is being used and how much energy the building used in the previous year.

You need a DEC for all publicly funded buildings that have a useful floor area of over 250 m² and which the public often visit.

You must display the DEC in a place within the building where the public can clearly see it. The reception area would normally be the most suitable location. The certificate itself must be A3 in size and in colour. A DEC only lasts for one year and you must update it every year.



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With a DEC you must have a report which will show how much energy the building uses. The report must also give recommendations on how to improve the energy efficiency of the building. The report lasts for seven years and you do not need to put it on display for the public, but you must keep a copy of the report on file.

Only an energy assessor, who is trained and qualified to produce a DEC and is registered with an accredited body, can provide a DEC. (You can get more information about the accredited bodies from your local Building Control office or by visiting www.epbniregisternd.com.) For more information on energy assessors in your area, check the Yellow Pages or visit www.epbniregisternd.com.

Inspecting air-conditioning systems

If an air-conditioning system has an output rating of more than 12kW (this rating will be printed, or stamped, on an identity plate fixed to the air-conditioning equipment, or recorded on the system's 'F Gas' register), you must have it inspected regularly by a registered air-conditioning energy assessor. The air-conditioning system must be inspected at least every five years. This applies to all types of air-conditioning with a cooling output of more than 12kW. An Air Conditioning Inspection Report (ACIR) must be produced and this is used to work out the efficiency of the building's air-conditioning system. The ACIR also identifies ways to reduce the amount of energy the air-conditioning system uses.

Air-conditioning systems installed after 30 December 2008 need to have an ACIR carried out five years after they are installed (you can find out the date your system was installed by finding the commissioning date for the system). If your air-conditioning system was installed before 30 December 2008, and you have not had an inspection carried out, you are breaking the regulations and so must have an inspection carried out immediately and have an ACIR produced. After the first inspection, the air-conditioning system must be inspected every five years.

The air-conditioning inspection report must include:

- an assessment of how efficient the air-conditioning system is;
- an assessment of the size of the air-conditioning system compared with the size of the building and what it is being used for; and

- advice on how to make the air-conditioning system more energy efficient or more effective (this may suggest replacing the system completely), and other possible solutions you have not already considered.

A 'relevant person' is responsible for making sure that the building they are responsible for has the air-conditioning inspection report. The 'relevant person' will be the person who has control of the air-conditioning system. For example, this could be the building manager or owner (not someone who just adjusts the temperature).

If you control an air-conditioning system, it is your responsibility, when carrying out an inspection, to:

- make sure it has been carried out in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008;
- use the appropriate method, depending on the size and type of system involved, as described in the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) guide CIBSE TM44;
- keep the most recent inspection report made by an energy assessor; and
- give any inspection report you have to any person taking over your responsibilities for controlling the air-conditioning system.

If you have taken over control of an air-conditioning system with an output of more than 12kW and you haven't been given an inspection report, you must make sure you have the system inspected within three months of taking over control.

Only an energy assessor who is registered with an accredited body to inspect air-conditioning systems can inspect the system and produce a report. (You can get more information about the accredited bodies from your local Building Control office or by visiting www.epbniregisternd.com.) For more information on energy assessors in your area, check the Yellow Pages under 'energy consultants' or 'energy conservation consultants' or visit www.epbniregisternd.com.

Energy Assessors

Energy assessors must be properly trained and qualified and members of a suitable accreditation scheme. These schemes will keep a list of their members and they should be able to provide contact details of local assessors. For domestic

properties, you can see the national register of energy assessors and find an assessor at www.epbniregister.com. For non-domestic properties, you can see the register and find an energy assessor at www.epbniregisternd.com. If you do not have access to a computer, you can write to the following address for more information.

Department of Finance
Building Regulations Unit
Clare House
303 Airport Road
Belfast
BT3 9ED

Or you can contact your local Building Control office or visit www.buildingcontrol-ni.com for more advice.

You will need an assessor registered with an accredited body who is qualified in the specific area of work, for example a DEC assessor can only carry out DEC energy assessments.

The cost of an EPC for a domestic property will depend on the size of the property. The cost of a typical EPC or DEC for a non-domestic property will also depend on the size and type of the building. The cost of an air-conditioning report will depend on the size and type of system used.

Fines

By law, local authorities can fine you if you do not provide a relevant EPC, DEC or air-conditioning inspection report.

EPCs

By law, if you are selling or renting a property you must show a copy of the EPC to anyone interested in buying or renting your property and must give a copy to the new owner or tenant. For domestic properties, the fine is £200 for each time you fail to provide an EPC.

For non-domestic properties, if you do not provide an EPC to any possible buyer or tenant the fine is fixed, in most cases, at 12.5 % of the rateable value of the building. If it is not possible to use the 12.5% calculation, for example when there is not enough information available about the property to work out the rates accurately, the fine will be £750. The fine can be from £500 to £5000 and you can be fined more than once.

DECs

An enforcement authority can fine you £500 for failing to display a valid DEC at all times in a place that the public can clearly see, and £1000 for failing to have a valid advisory report. You may also have to pay a fixed penalty of £200 for not providing an advisory report when you are asked. You can be fined more than once if you continue not to provide an advisory report.

Air-conditioning reports

The fine for failing to have an air-conditioning inspection report is fixed at £300. You can also be fined £300 if:

- you do not keep the most recent inspection report; or
- the relevant person changes, you do not give them the most recent inspection report, and they fail to make sure that the system is inspected within three months of the date on which they become the relevant person.

You may also have to pay a fixed penalty of £200 for not providing an advisory report when you are asked. You can be fined more than once if you continue not to provide an advisory report.

Further assistance

You can visit the following websites for more information.

- www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/building-regulations-and-energy-efficiency-buildings/energy-performance-buildings
- www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/contact-energy-performance-unit
- www.buildingcontrol-ni.com

If you need any help or advice, please phone us on 028 9027 0650.

For technical queries, a duty surveyor will be able to assist you, if you phone us on 028 9027 0650 or come into our customer reception in The Cecil Ward Building, in the afternoon (between 2pm-5pm on Monday-Thursday or 2pm-4:30pm on Friday).

There is also further information on our website: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/buildingcontrol.

Place and Economy

Building Control

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 buildingcontrol@belfastcity.gov.uk

 www.belfastcity.gov.uk/buildingcontrol